

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01 IO-10 /080 W

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R 281035Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9464

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, CD

SUBJECT: SMC PRESIDENT DESCRIBES REASONS BEHIND COUP

REF: N'DJAMENA 0995

1. REFTEL DESCRIBED FIRST MEETING ON APRIL 25 BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL PRESIDENT GEN. MALLOUM AT WHICH MALLOUM RESTATED COMMITMENTS OF NEW REGIME AND WAS INFORMED THAT USG CONSIDERS FULL RELATIONS TO BE REESTABLISHED. MOST OF FIFTEEN MINUTE MEETING, CALLED BY MALLOUM, WAS DEVOTED TO MALLOUM'S EXPLANATION OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO COUP AND ROLE OF MILITARY. MALLOUM'S PRESENTATION

NOT SURPRISINGLY FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE RADIO AND PRESS VERSION.

HE TOLD

IT IN LOW, QUIET VOICE IN UNREPETITIVE NARRATIVE EVIDENCING

PROBABILITY

THAT HE HAD SPOKEN SAME WORDS EARLIER IN DAY TO FRENCH, NIGERIAN,

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AND ZAIRIAN, AND WOULD REPEAT TO EAST GERMAN THAT AFTERNOON AND

SOVIET FOLLOWING DAY.

2. MALLOUM BEGAN BY STRESSING THAT CHADIAN MILITARY WAS NOT INTERESTED IN "POWER FOR SAKE OF POWER" (ACCUSATION OF LATE PRESIDENT TOMBALBAYE TO WHICH MILITARY PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE). HE, HIMSELF, MALLOUM SAID, HAD BEEN SUDDENLY ARRESTED IN JUNE 1973 AND JAILED WITHOUT EXPLANATION OF CHARGES, AND KEPT IN BARE ROOM UNTIL RELEASED BY COUP TWENTY-TWO MONTHS LATER. CHARGES BROUGHT IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR THAT HE HAD PARTICIPATED IN PLOT LED BY FORMER PRESIDENT WOMEN'S POLITICAL MOVEMENT, MME. KALTOUMA, WHO CONVICTED LATE FEBRUARY OF ATTEMPTING COUP BY SORCERY WERE SIMPLY RIDICULOUS. "I AM A SOLDIER," MALLOUM SAID, "AND IF I HAD WANTED TO PLOT A COUP, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE WITH OTHER SOLDIERS, NOT WOMEN." INCIDENT NIGHT APRIL 2-3 AT GENDARMERIE DURING WHICH PRISONER SEIZED WEAPON AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED THREE FRENCH PRIVATE ADVISERS WAS NO MORE THAN MINOR IF UNHAPPY OCCURRENCE AND GENDARMERIE CHIEF COL. DJIME, HIS DEPUTY, MAJOR KOTTIGA, AND CHIEF MILITARY CABINET GEN. DJOGO COLLECTIVELY SAW NO NEED DISTURB PRESIDENT IN MIDDLE OF NIGHT AS SITUATION COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL. PRESIDENT ARRIVED ON SCENE, HOWEVER, AND BY MORNING ALL THREE OFFICERS UNDER ARREST. ONLY THREE HOURS BEFORE COUP, MALLOUM ALLEGED, PRESIDENT PERSONALLY PARTICIPATED IN BEATING AND TORTURE OF MAJ. KOTTIGA WHO HAS SINCE BEEN SENT TO FRENCE FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT OF ABUSES SUFFERED DURING IMPRISONMENT. PUBLIC INSULTS AND HUMILIATIONS WERE POURED ON MILITARY BY PRESIDENT, AND IT SOON BECAME APPARENT THAT PRESIDENT INTENDED SPLIT UP MILITARY INTO SMALL UNITS, MAKING THE ARMY WHOSE TRUE ROLE IS DEFENDER OF NATION INTO "NO MORE THAN PALACE GUARD." MILITARY THEREFORE CONCLUDED IT HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ATTEMPT TO DEPOSE TOMBALBAYE. ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN HOPED TO TAKE TOMBALBAYE ALIVE, HE APPEARED WITH WEAPON IN HIS HAND AND WAS SHOT BY SOLDIERS. MALLOUM STRESSED THAT COUP WAS STRICTLY AN INTERNAL AFFAIR AND EMPHASIZED THAT NO FOREIGNERS WERE HARMED DURING THE TAKEOVER.

3. COMMENT: ABOVE ACCOUNT GENERALLY TALLIES WITH REPORTS OTHER SOURCES, INCLUDING TORTURE MAJOR KOTTIGA, EXCEPT THAT OTHER RELIABLE REPORTS INDICATE TOMBALBAYE WAS UNARMED.
LITTLE

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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